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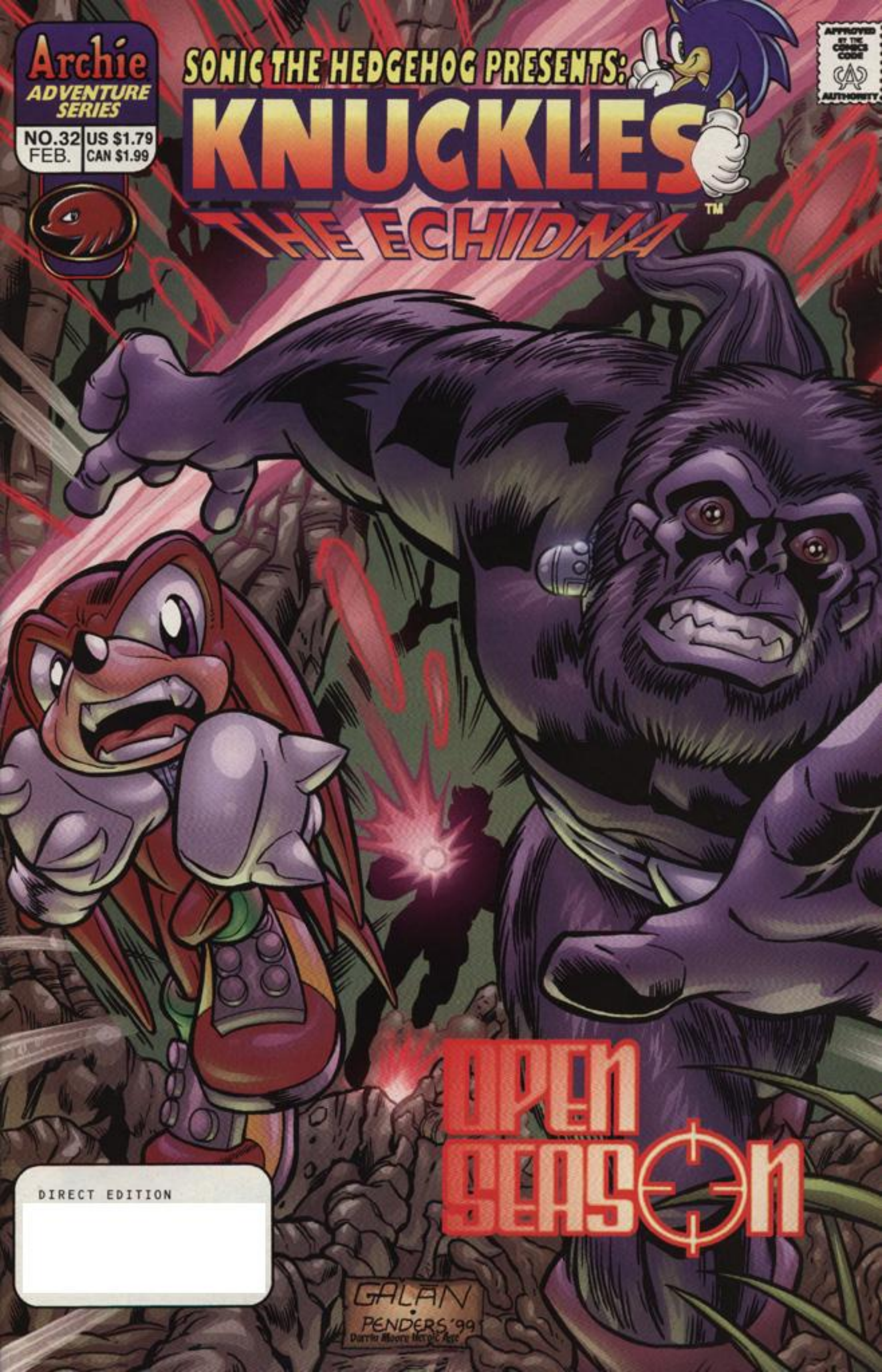
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG PRESENTS:

KNUCKLES

THE ECHIDNA

TM

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COMICS
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DIRECT EDITION

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PENDERS '99

Darwin Moore: Heroic Age

KNUCKLES

BOOK THIRTY-TWO KING OF THE HILL PART THREE OF THREE

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BORN TO THE MOST NOBLE OF ECHIDNA HOUSES, THE LATEST TO CONTINUE THE FAMILY HERITAGE AND RESPONSIBILITY AS GUARDIAN OF THE FLOATING ISLAND, DEFENDER OF ALL AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL FROM THE WORLD BEYOND AS WELL AS THOSE WHO WOULD THREATEN FROM WITHIN!

ARCHIE COMICS AND SEGA PRESENT... KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA!

When we last left our hero, Knuckles was forced -- by the overlander Hunter -- to wear a collar around his neck. It is electronically connected to another, worn by the gorilla, Monk. They cannot separate without being electronically zapped by their collars.

Forced to work together, the unhappy duo struggles to evade the evil sportsman as he commences with the hunt...

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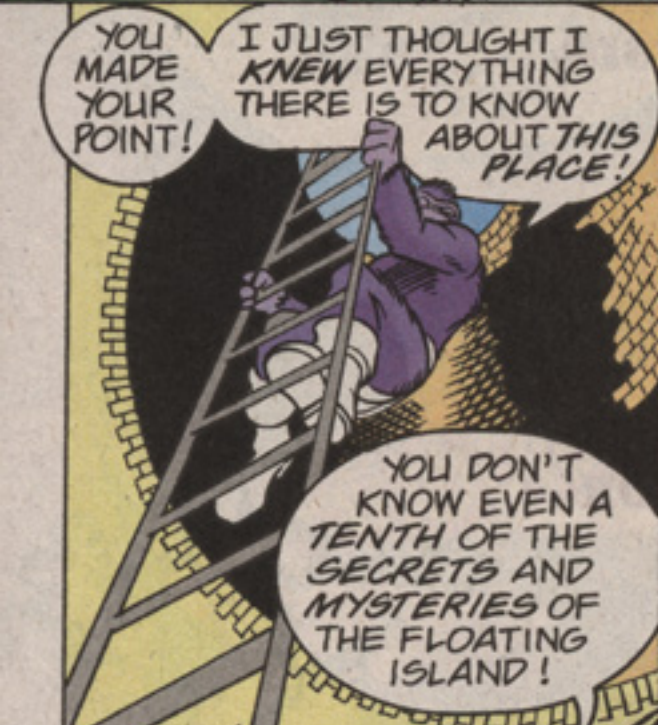


A HIDDEN CITY?!!

LOCATED DEEP WITHIN THE FLOATING ISLAND?!!

YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!!!

LOOK--DO YOU WANT A FIGHTING CHANCE WITH HUNTER OR NOT?!!



YOU MADE YOUR POINT!

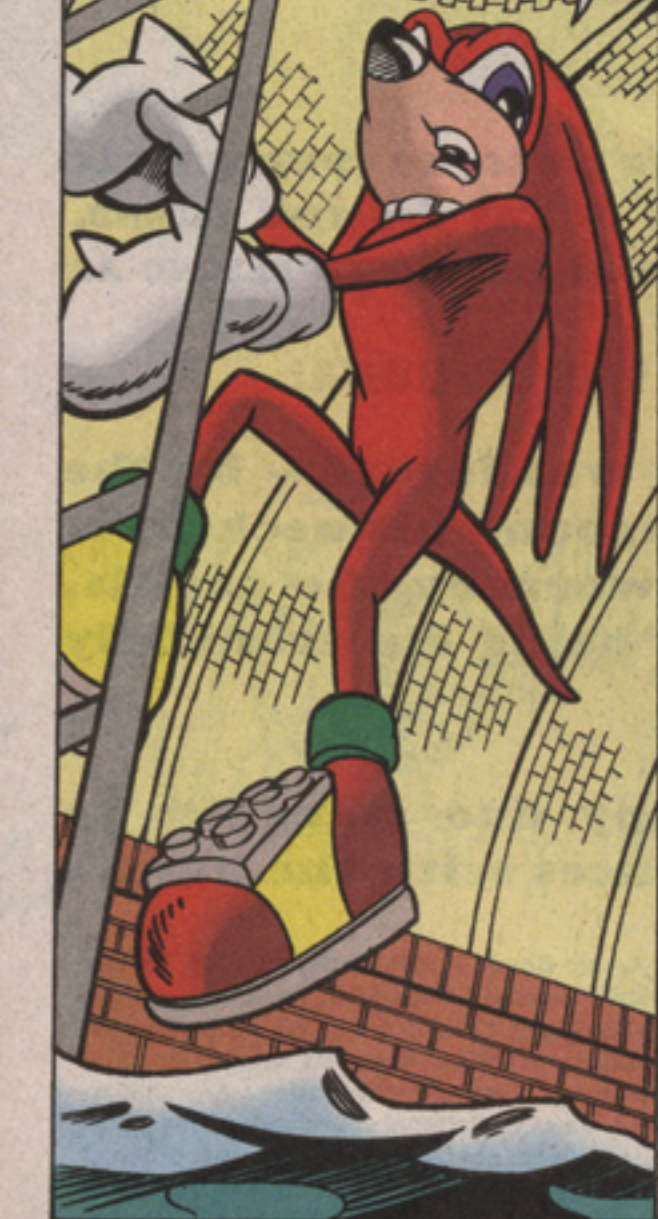
I JUST THOUGHT I KNEW EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS PLACE!

YOU DON'T KNOW EVEN A TENTH OF THE SECRETS AND MYSTERIES OF THE FLOATING ISLAND!



AND I SUPPOSE YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT THE ISLAND!

HARDLY! I'M STILL LEARNING!



DID YOU AT LEAST KNOW WE'D COME TO A DEAD END?

THERE'S A WAY DOWN!



WHY DON'T YOU SHOW ME?!

HEY!!!



MONK
CAUGHT ME
BY
SURPRISE!

WHAT'S YOUR
PROBLEM,
ECHIDNA?

I WASN'T
PREPARED
TO GLIDE
YET!

FORTUNATELY, I'M
ABLE TO BREAK
MY FALL!

IT'S ONLY
WATER DOWN
BELOW!

WHAT'S TO
BE SCARED
OF?

IF I WASN'T STUCK
WITH YOU, I'D BE AWFUL
TEMPTED TO LEAVE
YOU TO FEND FOR
YOURSELF!

C'MON! TIME'S
A'WASTING!

GUESS YOU'RE
USED TO TAKING
A DIVE!

VER-RY
FUNNY!

ALL RIGHT
ALREADY!

I'M MOVING
AS FAST AS
I CAN!

YOU BETTER
PICK UP THE
PACE!

OTHERWISE,
THAT LINE WILL
READ GOOD ON YOUR
TOMBSTONE!

HUNTER
STILL HAS
TO CATCH US
FIRST--

--PROVIDING
HE CAN FIND
US!

WHERE
IN BLAZES
ARE WE
ANYWAY?

HEY!!

DON'T GET
TOO FAR
AHEAD!

HUNTER'S
COLLAR IS
STARTING TO
HURT!

TO THE DEATH

CHAPTER I

YOU'RE NOT KIDDING!
THIS IS A REAL PAIN!

AS FOR WHERE WE ARE--

--WELCOME TO HYDRO CITY!!

I WAS TOLD IT WAS FIRST BUILT HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO--

--BEFORE EVEN ECHIDNAOPOLIS SUPPOSEDLY WAS!

AND THERE HASN'T BEEN A SOUL DOWN HERE EVER SINCE I CAN REMEMBER!

WE'LL HEAD DOWN THIS TUNNEL!

UNLESS HUNTER IS TRACKING US VIA OUR COLLARS--

"--WE AT LEAST HAVE A FIGHTING CHANCE OF SURVIVAL!"

INTERESTING
THE TWO OF THEM
SHOULD HEAD THIS
WAY!

I WOULD'VE
USED THE RIVER
BACK THERE TO THROW
ANYONE FOLLOWING
OFF MY TRAIL!

AS IT
IS--

--EVEN TREADING
AS LIGHTLY AS THEY
HAVE, THE IMPRESSION
THEY LEFT IN THE GRASS
IS LIKE A BEACON
TO ME!

BUT
WHAT'S
THIS?!

THEY
SEEM TO HAVE
VANISHED!

THEIR
FOOTSTEPS
SIMPLY END--

--WITHOUT GOING
ANYWHERE!

INGENIUS!
THEY WENT
UNDERGROUND
TO EVADE ME!

WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT
OUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF
A FOREST THERE WOULD BE A
TRAP DOOR LEADING TO--

--LEADING TO
WHAT? NOW
THAT'S A GOOD
QUESTION!

INTERESTING!
I HEAR WATER
FLOWING DOWN
BELOW!

IT APPEARS MY
EARLIER THOUGHTS
ABOUT THOSE TWO WERE
INCORRECT--

THE CO-STARS TAKE THE LEAD!



ON
SALE
OCTOBER
12,
1999



WHOSE COMIC IS THIS ANYWAY?

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"--AS THEY MAY
YET MAKE A
CHALLENGE OF
THE HUNT YET!"

WHAT DO YOU
SUPPOSE IT IS,
ARCHIMEDES?

I HESITATE TO EVEN
GUESS, LOCKE--

--BUT WE
MIGHT FIND
WHOEVER'S
JAMMING
OUR SYSTEM
INSIDE!

THIS IS
UNUSUAL!

NO ALARMS
OR SECURITY
SYSTEMS TO
SPEAK OF,
APPARENTLY!

I WOULD
IMAGINE SOMEONE
WHO WOULD GO TO
THE TROUBLE OF
SCRAMBLING
OUR ENTIRE
COMMUNICATION
SYSTEM--

--WOULD BE MORE
HOSTILE TOWARD
INTRUDERS!

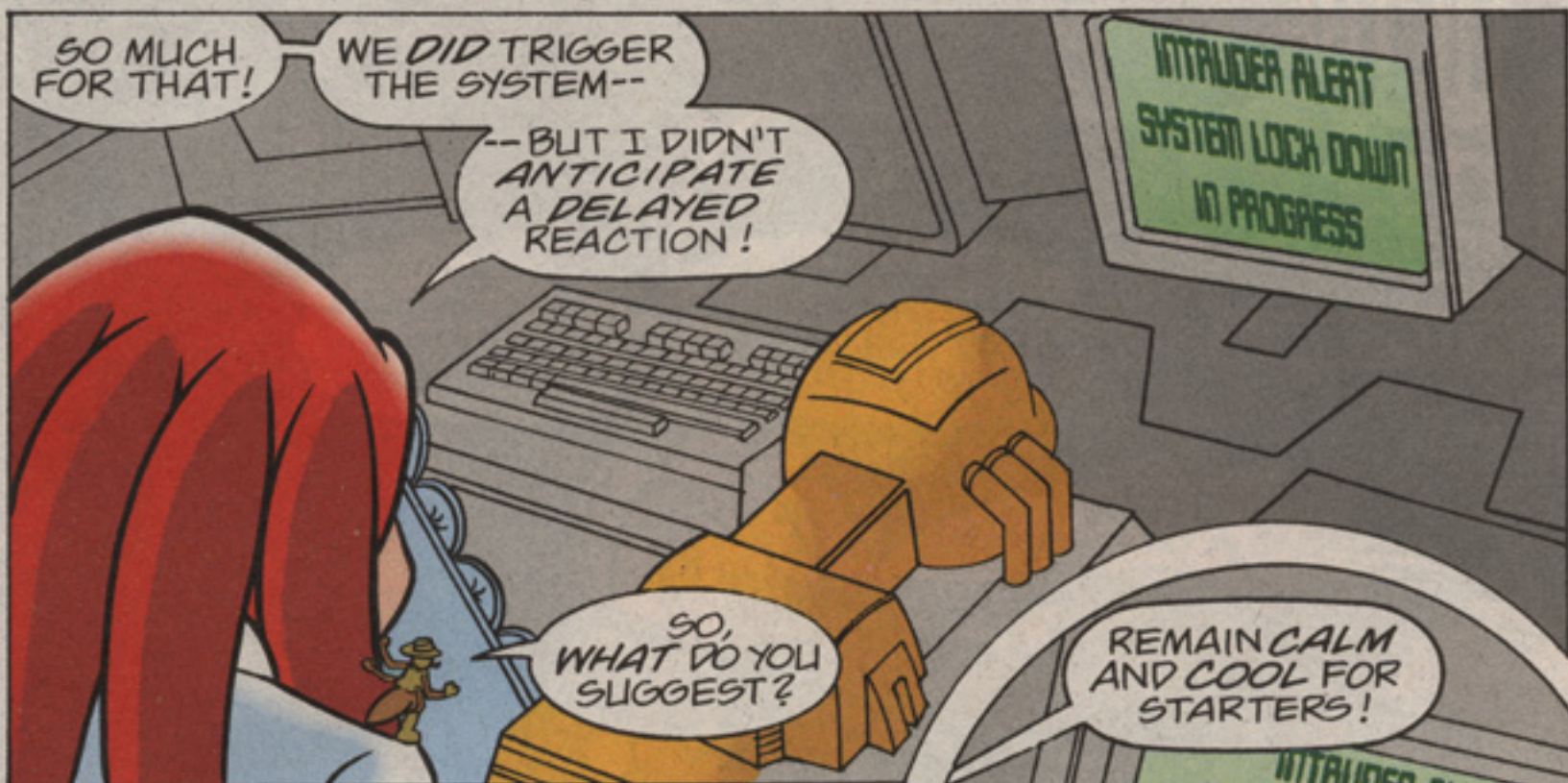
IT'S ALMOST
TOO QUIET,
ARCHIMEDES!

THE CALM
BEFORE THE
STORM, EH?

THE CONSOLE!!

IT'S BEEN
ACTIVATED!

BRRP-BRRP-BRRP-BRRP



SO MUCH FOR THAT!

WE DID TRIGGER THE SYSTEM--

--BUT I DIDN'T ANTICIPATE A DELAYED REACTION!

SO, WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

REMAIN CALM AND COOL FOR STARTERS!

INTRUDER ALERT
SYSTEM MALFUNCTION
DIAGNOSTICS ACTIVATED
SEQUENCE ONE CHECKED...
SEQUENCE TWO CHECKED...
SYSTEM COMPROMISED
DESTRUCT SEQUENCE ACTIVATE
60...59...58...



WE NOW HAVE LESS THAN A MINUTE TO SAVE OURSELVES!

NOT ONLY THAT, BUT WE HAVE TO PREVENT THIS PLACE FROM BLOWING UP!

NO TELLING WHO OR WHAT IS ON BOARD BESIDES US!

BEST GUESS-- THIS MAY DO THE TRICK!

AND IF YOU'RE WRONG, LOCKE?

WE CAN'T TAKE THE CHANCE!

LET'S CUT OUR LOSSES AND GET OUT OF HERE!



THAT WAS TOO CLOSE, IF YOU ASK ME!

WHOEVER WE'RE DEALING WITH WILL DO ANYTHING WHEN DEALING WITH THE OPPOSITION!

THAT MAKES IT MORE IMPERATIVE WE FIND KNUCKLES!

End Chapter One

TO THE DEATH

CHAPTER 2

FINALLY!
I'M REGISTERING A
HEAT SIGNATURE
IN MY SIGHTS!

I'M
REGISTERING
ONLY ONE,
HOWEVER!

THE OTHER
MUST BE OUT OF
MY LINE-OF-
SIGHT!

NO MATTER!
IF THEY WISH TO
MAKE IT EASY FOR
ME, I'LL TAKE DOWN
THE ONE--

" --AND MOVE IN
FOR THE KILL ON
THE OTHER! "

WHOA!
DIDJA SEE
THAT?!

HUNTER'S
CLOSING IN!

HE
MUST HAVE SEEN
YOUR TORCH
AND WANTED TO
SCARE
US!

C'MON!



DITCH
THE LIGHT,
MONK!

HEY!!!

THAT'S PROBABLY
HOW HE WAS ABLE
TO SEE US!

YOUR
MOTHER EVER
TEACH YOU
MANNERS?

LIKE
YOU'RE SUCH A
CLASS ACT,
EH?

NOW—
C'MON!

EVEN IF HE CAN'T SEE US, HE'LL BE ABLE TO
FOLLOW US IF WE STAY ALONG THIS PATH!



WE'RE IN A
TUNNEL, YOU
BABOON!

I DON'T
SEE MANY
OPTIONS IN
HERE!

HOW'S THIS? YOU SCARED
OF A LITTLE CLIMB?

DOES THE TERM
"OPEN SEASON"
HAVE ANY MEANING
TO YOU?

LIKE
I HAVE A
CHOICE!

KEEP
MOVING!
TIME'S
AWASTING!



THEY'RE
EITHER GETTING
CARELESS--

--OR ELSE THEY
DON'T REALIZE HOW
FAR SOUND TRAVELS
DOWN HERE!

EITHER WAY--

--IT COULD BE
THEIR
UNDOING!

Hmmm--THEY'VE
GOTTEN QUIET ALL
OF A SUDDEN!

TALK ABOUT
THE POT CALLING
THE KETTLE
BLACK--

--OVERCONFIDENCE
COULD BE MY UNDOING IF
I DON'T PAY ATTENTION!

NOW, IF I WERE
THEY-- I'D HEAD FOR
THE HIGH GROUND!

BUT IF
I WERE THEY--
WOULD I
STAY AND
FIGHT?

OR WOULD
I RUN WITH
THE HOPE OF
ESCAPE?

MOST
UNUSUAL! FOR
ONCE I'M
UNCERTAIN OF
MY NEXT MOVE!

BY FORCING THE TWO OF
THEM TO DEPEND ON EACH OTHER,
THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE IS
THAT MUCH GREATER!

IN FACT, I FEEL SUCH
A RUSH OF EXHILARATION
AT THIS MOMENT!

LIKE I HAVEN'T FELT
IN A LONG WHILE!

A CLARITY
OF THOUGHT NOW
ENVELOPS ME--

"--ALERTING ME THAT I HAD
BEST BE PREPARED FOR
POSSIBLE RETALIATION!"

HERE'S
THE *ELECTRIC*
CABLE YOU
WANTED--

--EVEN
THOUGH I DON'T
SEE WHAT *GOOD*
IT WILL DO!

THAT'S
WHAT I LIKE
BEST ABOUT YOU,
MONK--

-- YOUR
ABILITY TO
STRATEGIZE!

BAD
ENOUGH I
CAN'T GLIDE
THROUGH
THIS MESS
THAT I HAVE
TO *DEPEND*
ON YOU!



WE NEED TO SET
A TRAP!

OR, AT
THE VERY LEAST,
SOMETHING THAT
MAKES LIFE MORE
DIFFICULT FOR
HUNTER AND
BUYS US SOME
TIME!



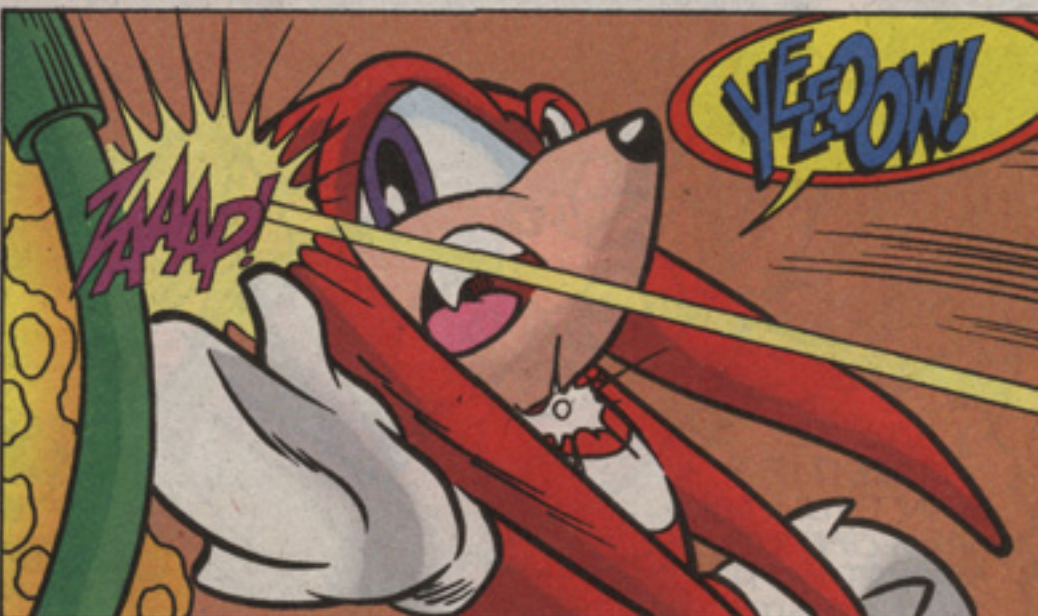
I THINK YOU'RE
WHACKO,
ECHIDNA!

ONE CARELESS
MOVE AND WE BITE
THE BIG ONE INSTEAD!



YEAH-- WELL,
STAY CLOSE!

THIS COLLAR IS A
PAIN IN THE NECK THE
FARTHER YOU ARE FROM ME!





I WAS
RIGHT!

BY ATTEMPTING TO
HOLD THEIR GROUND,
THEY GAVE ME THE
OPPORTUNITY TO
CATCH UP!

NOW THAT I'VE
GIVEN THEM A WARNING
SHOT, IT'S TIME TO GO IN
FOR THE KILL!

AAARGHHH!

MONK'S TOO
FAR!

CAN'T KEEP
MY BALANCE
THROUGH ALL THIS
PAIN!

UULNNGHH!

I'LL BE
AMAZED IF I
DIDN'T PULL MY
ARM OFF ITS
SOCKET WITH
THAT STUNT!

IMPOSSIBLE!!!
I MISSED!!!

HOW?!!
HOW?!! MY AIM
WAS TRUE!!



WHA---?? THE MONKEY ?!!

I'M GONNA WRAP THAT RIFLE AROUND YOUR NECK IF YOU DON'T REMOVE THIS BLASTED COLLAR RIGHT NOW!!!

BETTER ROLL WITH THE BLOW-- SO AS TO BE IN A POSITION TO REGAIN CONTROL!



TAKE IT OFF!!
TAKE IT OFF!!

DO YOU HEAR?!

JUST A BIT MORE LEVERAGE AND--

HE'S CRAZED OUT OF HIS MIND WITH PAIN!





HUUUNNTERRRR!

SOMETHING'S
WRONG!

THE PAIN
INFLICTED FROM
THE COLLAR SHOULD
BE OVER-
WHELMING!



SNAP!



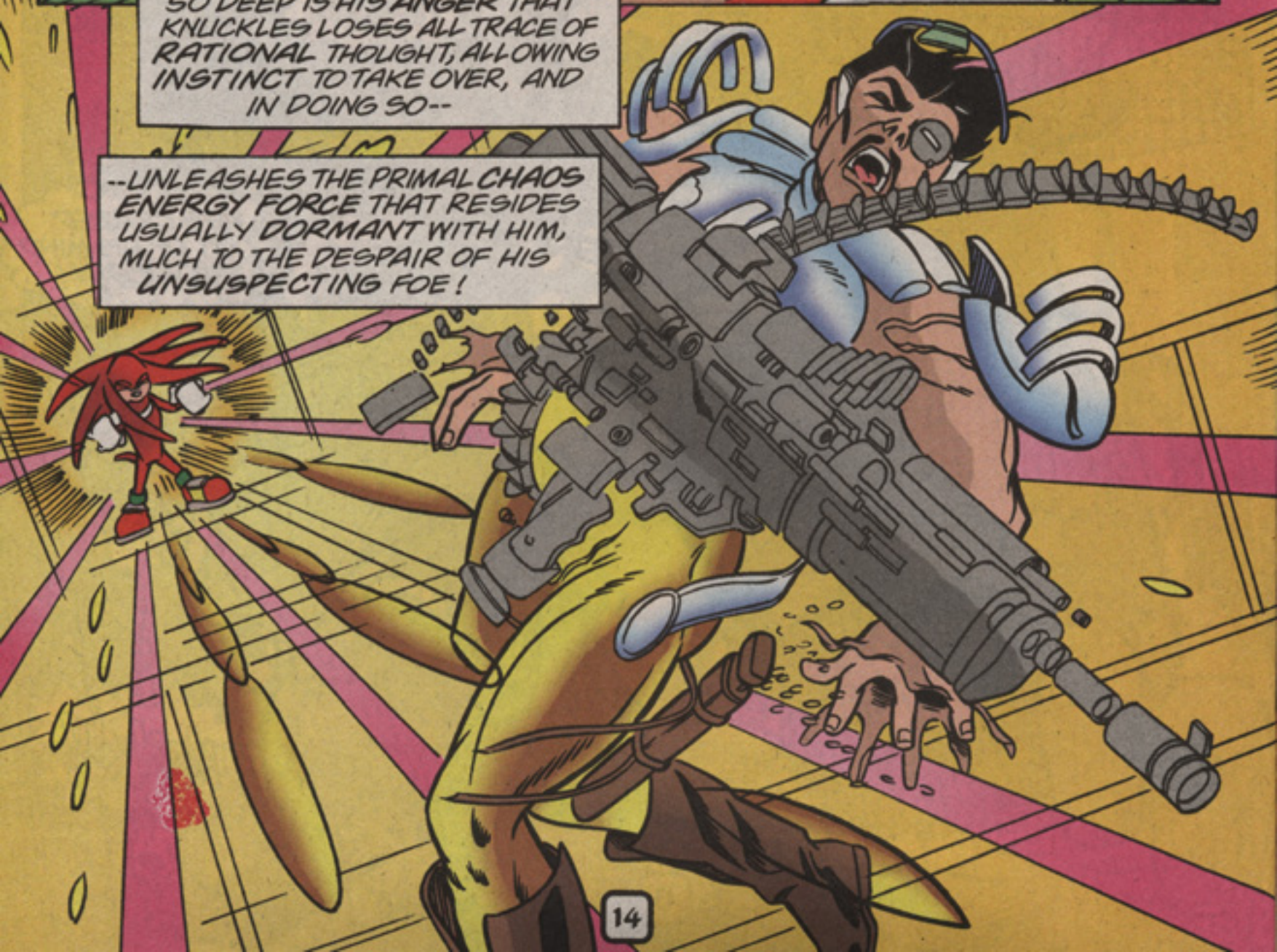
MY
RIFLE!!!

IT'S BEGUN TO
VIBRATE!



SO DEEP IS HIS ANGER THAT
KNUCKLES LOSES ALL TRACE OF
RATIONAL THOUGHT, ALLOWING
INSTINCT TO TAKE OVER, AND
IN DOING SO--

--UNLEASHES THE PRIMAL CHAOS
ENERGY FORCE THAT RESIDES
USUALLY DORMANT WITH HIM,
MUCH TO THE DESPAIR OF HIS
UNSUSPECTING FOE!





IT'S JUST THAT ALL THE
DUCTWORK AND WIRING MAKE
IT DIFFICULT FOR MY
DIRECTIONAL SENSE
TO PINPOINT THE EXACT
SPOT!

HE'S WITHIN THE
IMMEDIATE VACINITY,
MARK MY WORDS!

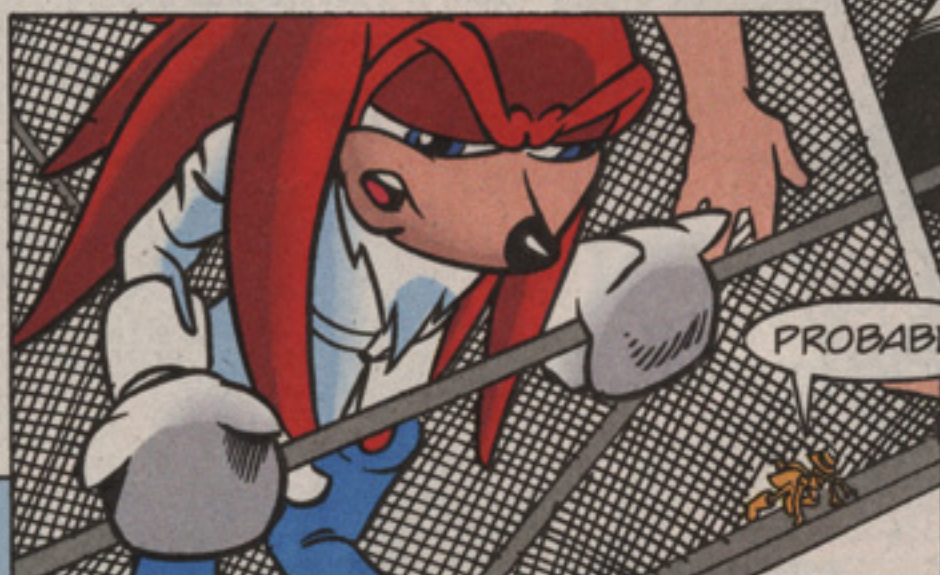
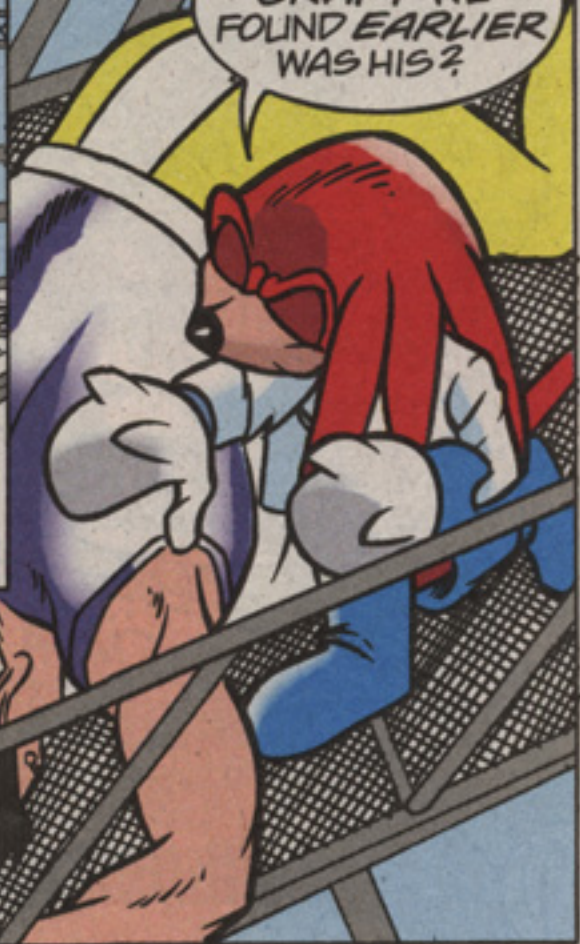
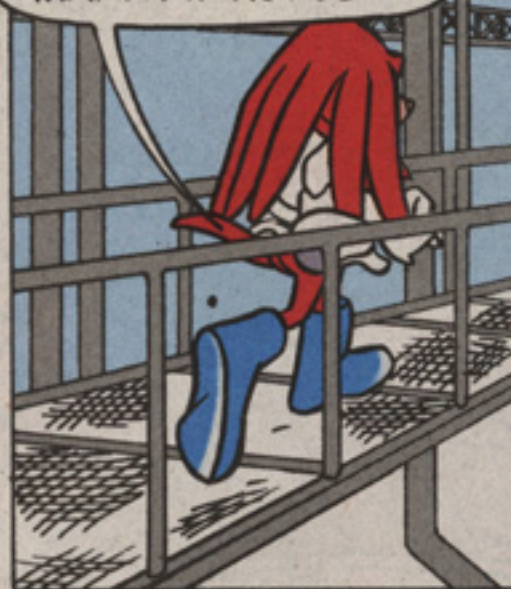
I GUESS YOU'RE
RIGHT!

THIS ONE
LOOKS LIKE MY SON
GOT THE BETTER
OF HIM!

THINK THE
CRAFT WE
FOUND EARLIER
WAS HIS?

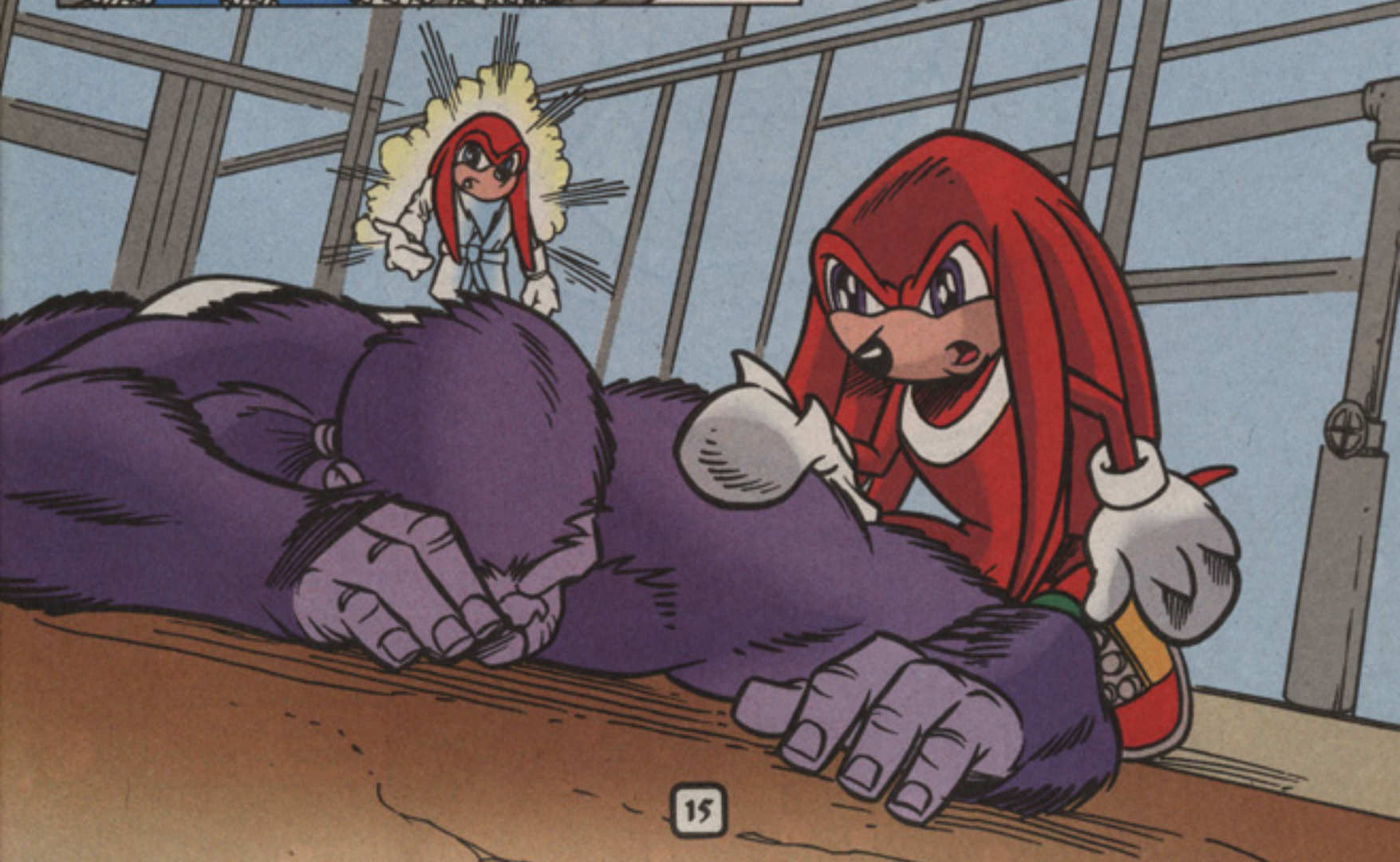
WELL?
WHERE IS
HE?

KNUCKLES IS
HERE, LOCKE!



PROBABLY.

SPEAKING
OF OUR YOUNG
CHARGE...



SOME TIME LATER, DEEP WITHIN
THE INNER CORE OF HAVEN...

I'LL SAY
THIS FOR HUNTER,
HE'S QUITE
RESILIENT!

HE HASN'T
BUDGED AN INCH SINCE
WE PLACED HIM IN THE
PRISON POD!

IF IT GETS TOO
UNBEARABLE IN THERE, WE
CAN ALWAYS MOVE HIM TO THE
CRYOGENIC CHAMBER!

AS LONG AS HE CAN
EAT AND BREATHE IN THERE,
I WANT HIM TO ROT FOR WHAT HE
DID TO MONK, AND SNOWPIGEON
AND ALL THE REST OF HIS
VICTIMS, DAD!

IT MAY NOT
BRING THEM BACK, BUT
AT LEAST NOW THEY CAN
REST EASIER!



THE END...
FOR NOW!

ESPIO THE CHAMELEON

THE STORY THUS FAR... AFTER CAPTURING AND ROBOTICIZING THE CHAMELEON VALDEZ, ROBOTNIK MACH 2 THEN SENT HIM BACK TO HIS PEOPLE ON THE FLOATING ISLAND, WITH THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF HAVING VALDEZ USE THEM AS A BARGAINING CHIP IN OBTAINING THE CHAOS EMERALD FROM THE GAURDIAN OF THE FLOATING ISLAND.

CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS SCHEME IS ESPIO, WHO MUST DECIDE IF HE CAN SAVE VALDEZ, WITHOUT BETRAYING KNUCKLES...

WELL, MY FRIEND, WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE?

I'LL DO IT!

I'LL HELP YOU GET THE EMERALD ON CONDITION YOU FIRST RELEASE EVERYONE ELSE!

IN: THE WORST OF ENEMIES

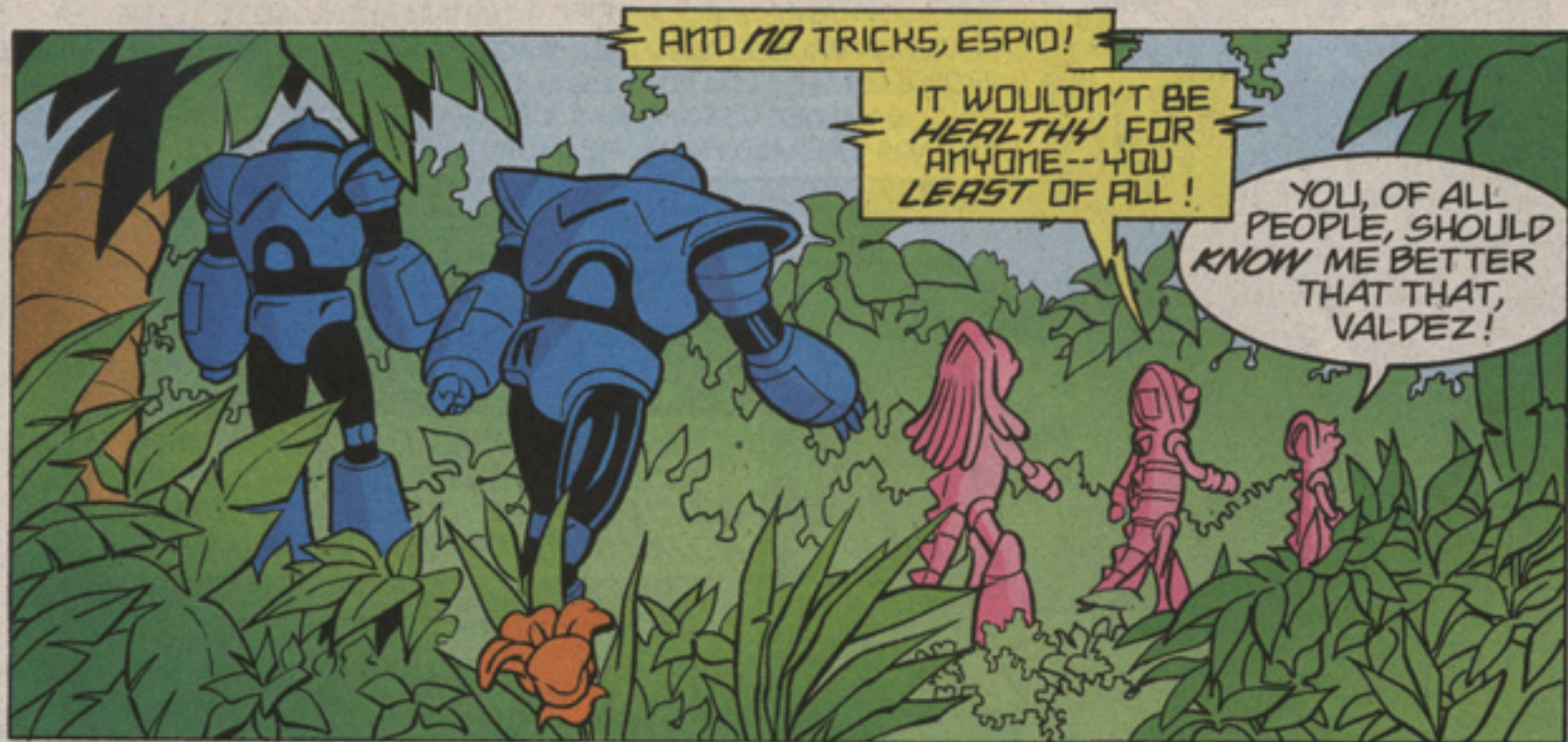
WHAT SORT OF FOOL DO YOU TAKE ME FOR, ESPIO?

YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY BARGAINING FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH!

YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE US TO KNUCKLES FIRST AND HELP US OBTAIN THE EMERALD!

WRITER- KEN PENDERS
PENCILER- COLLEEN DORAN
INKER- ANDREW PEPOY
COLORIST- FRANK GAGLIARDO
LETTERER- VICKIE WILLIAMS
EDITOR- J.F. GABRIE

NOW, LET'S GO!



AND *NO* TRICKS, ESPID!

IT WOULDN'T BE *HEALTHY* FOR ANYONE-- YOU *LEAST* OF ALL!

YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULD *KNOW* ME BETTER THAT THAT, VALDEZ!

IN FACT, I'M *SURPRISED* YOU DON'T *REMEMBER* THE TIME YOU AND I WENT TO SEE KNUCKLES IN HIS *DOMAIN*!

WHAT WAS IT-- FOUR? FIVE YEARS AGO?

I CAN'T *RECALL*!

THIS PATH SEEMS *VAGUELY* FAMILIAR, BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER IN ANY EVENT!



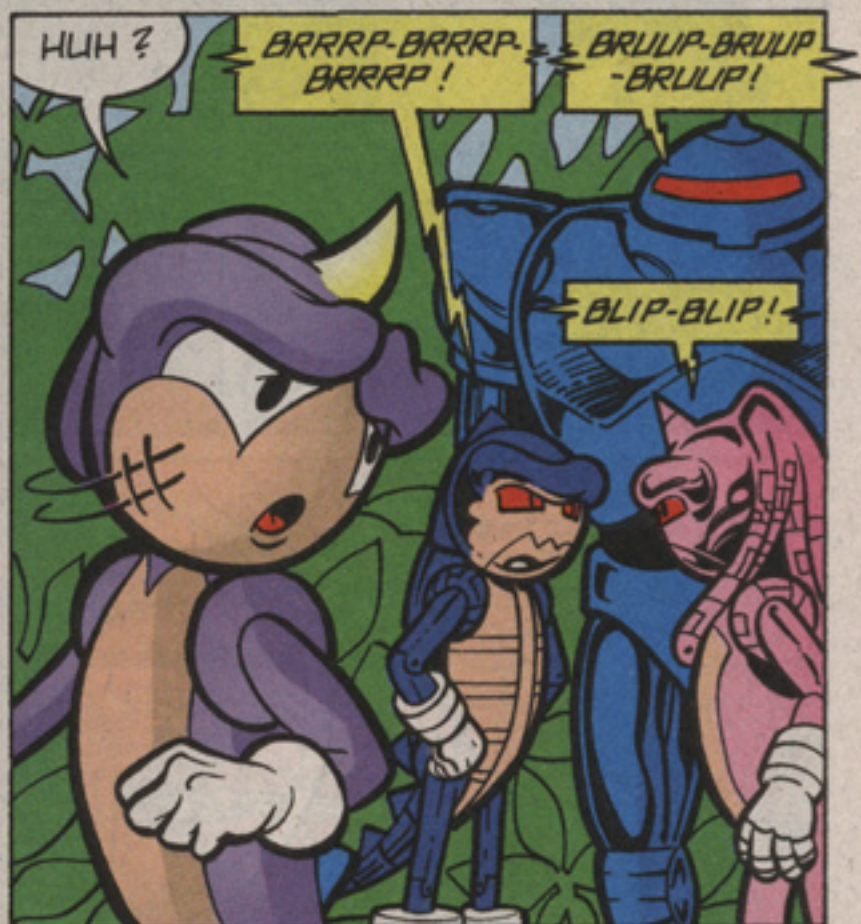
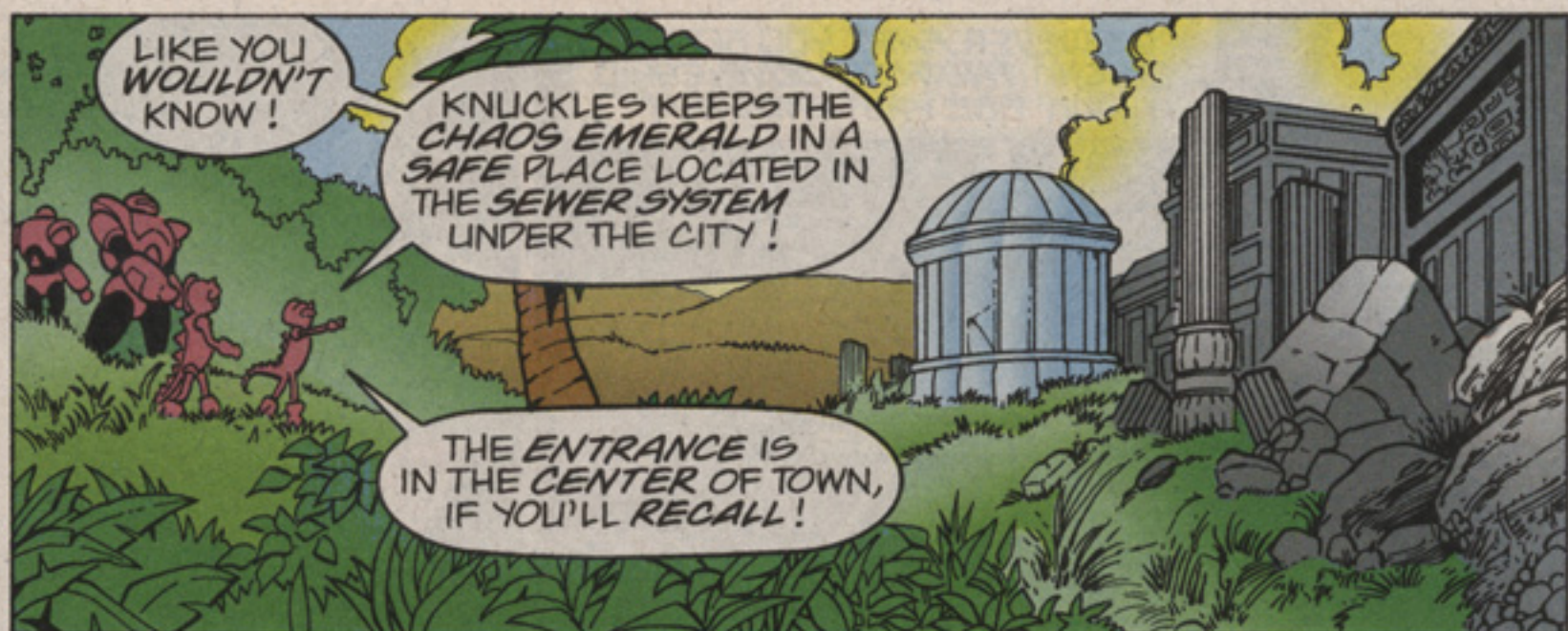
ALL I NEED TO DO IS PRESS *THIS* BUTTON AT THE FIRST SIGN OF *TROUBLE*, AND *NOTHING* YOU SAY OR DO WILL *STOP* WHAT HAPPENS NEXT!

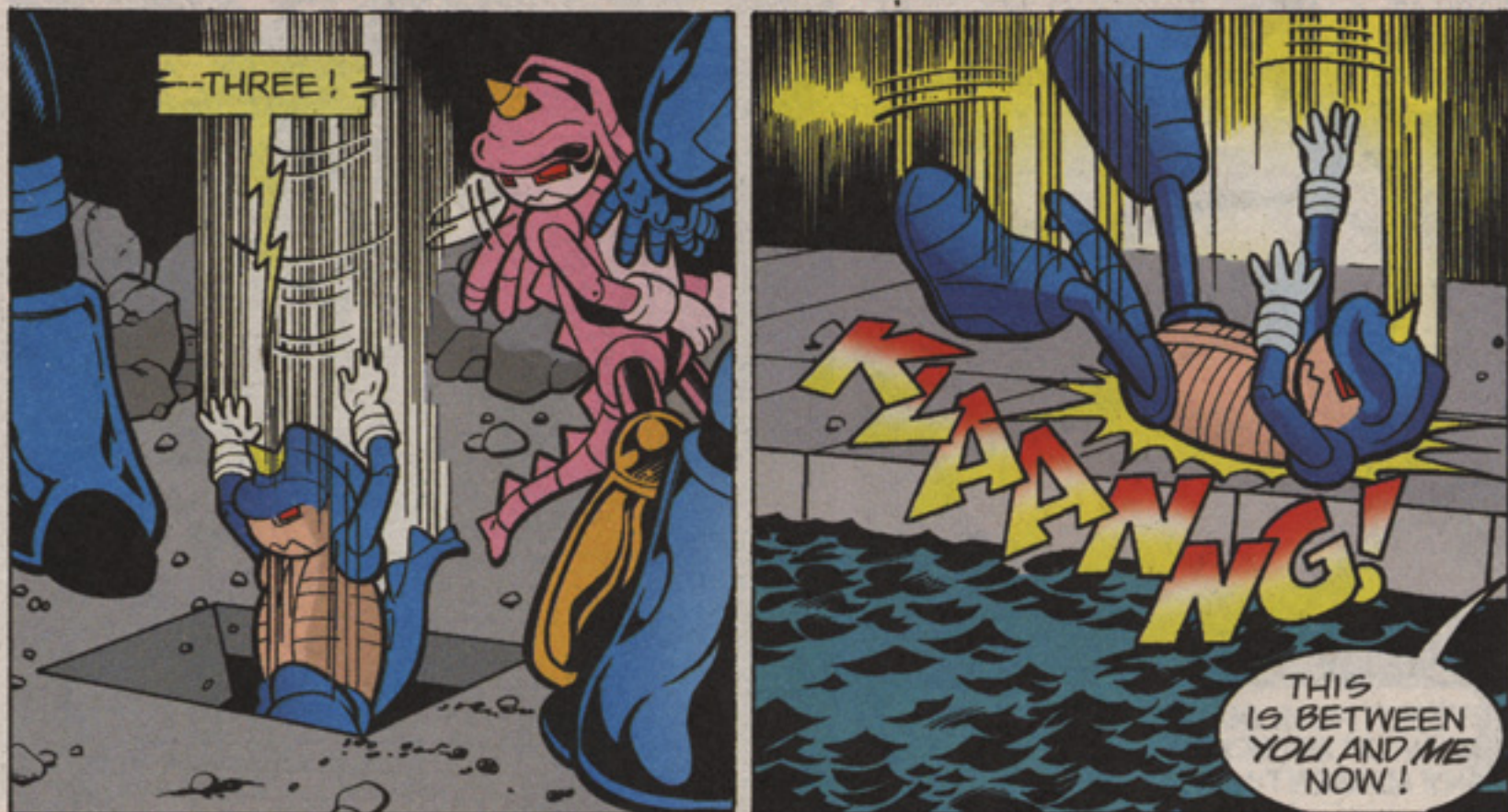
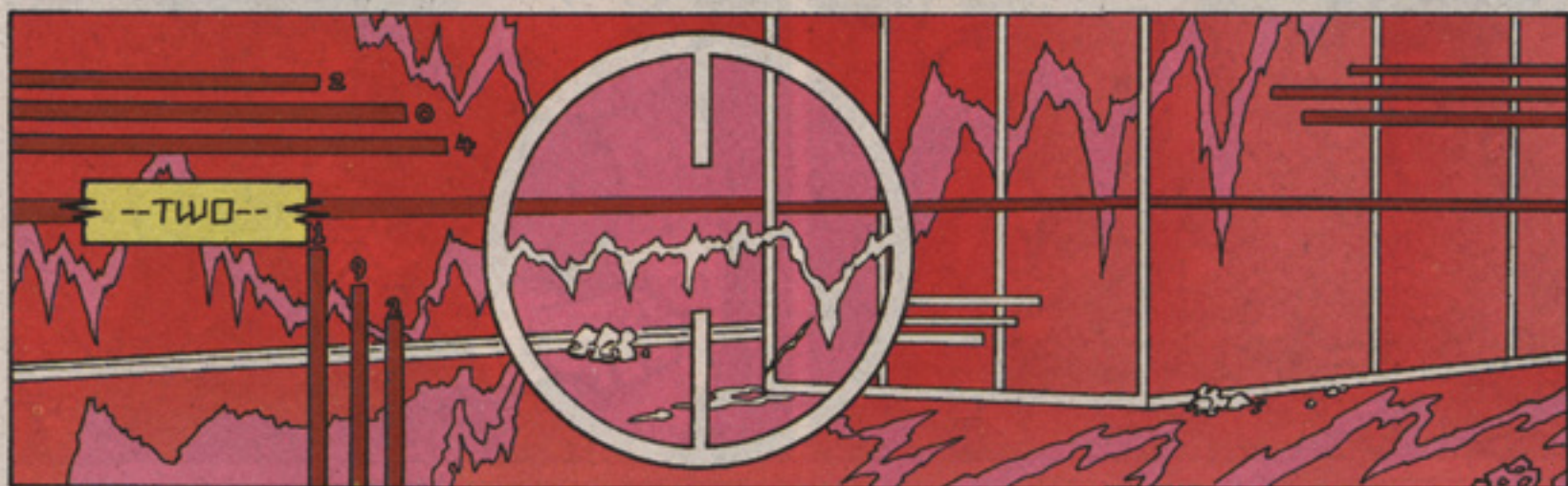
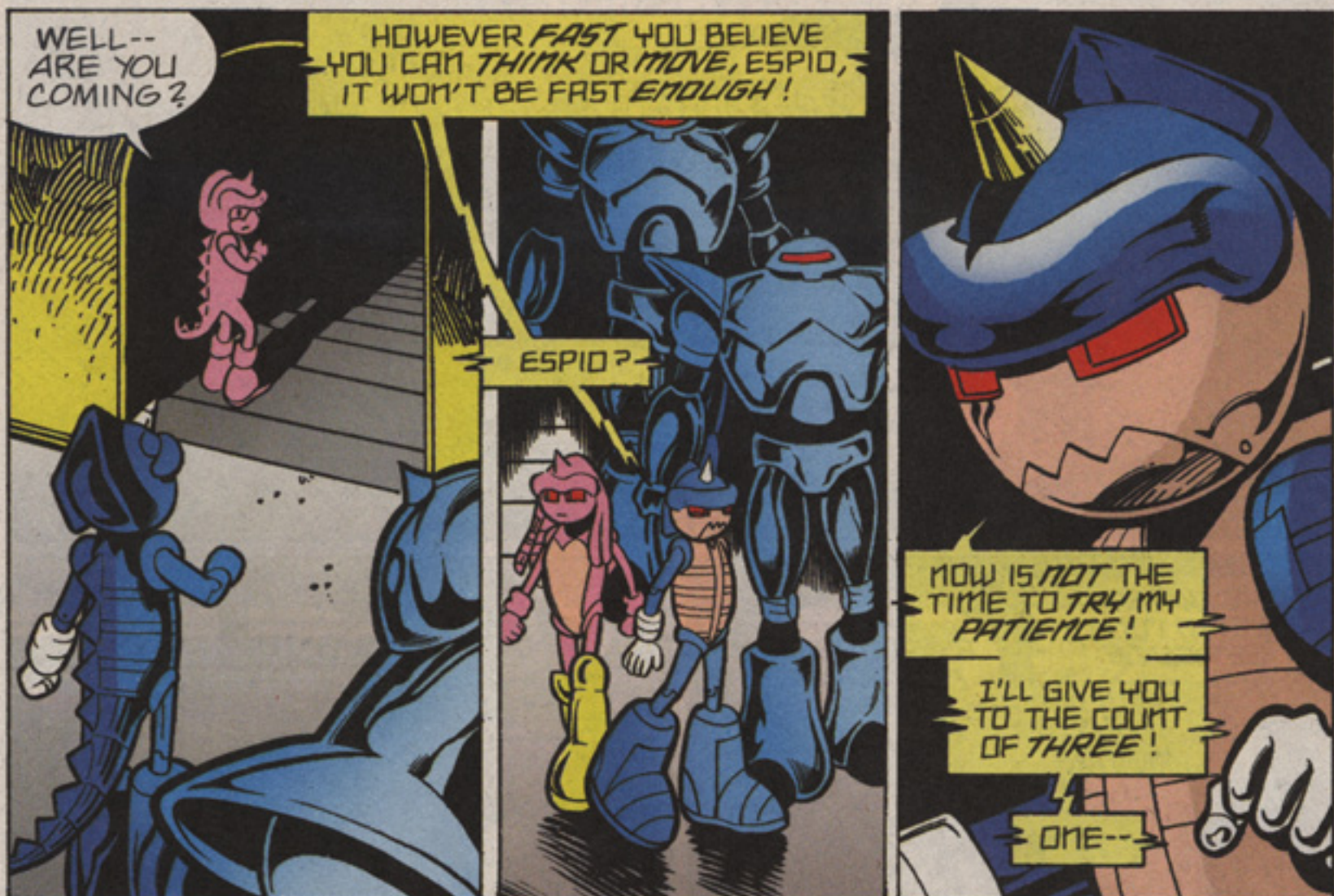
WHEN DID YOU *BECOME* SUCH A *BROKEN* RECORD, VALDEZ?

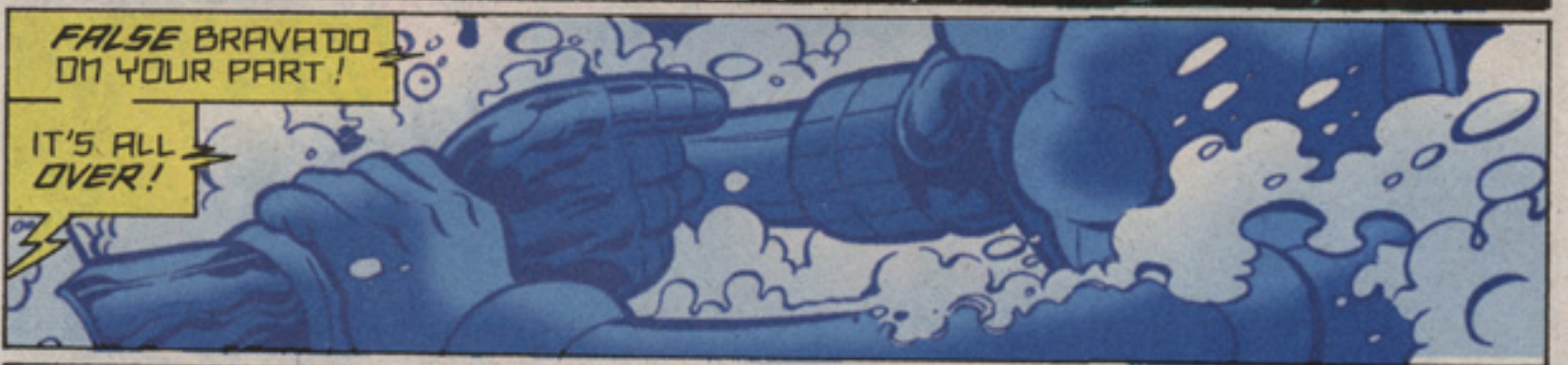
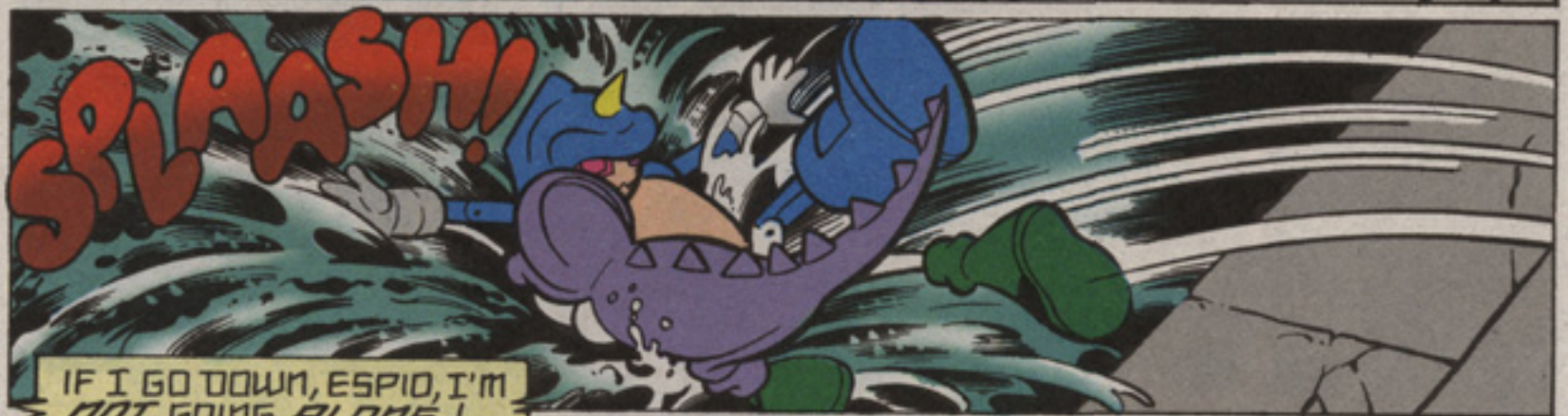
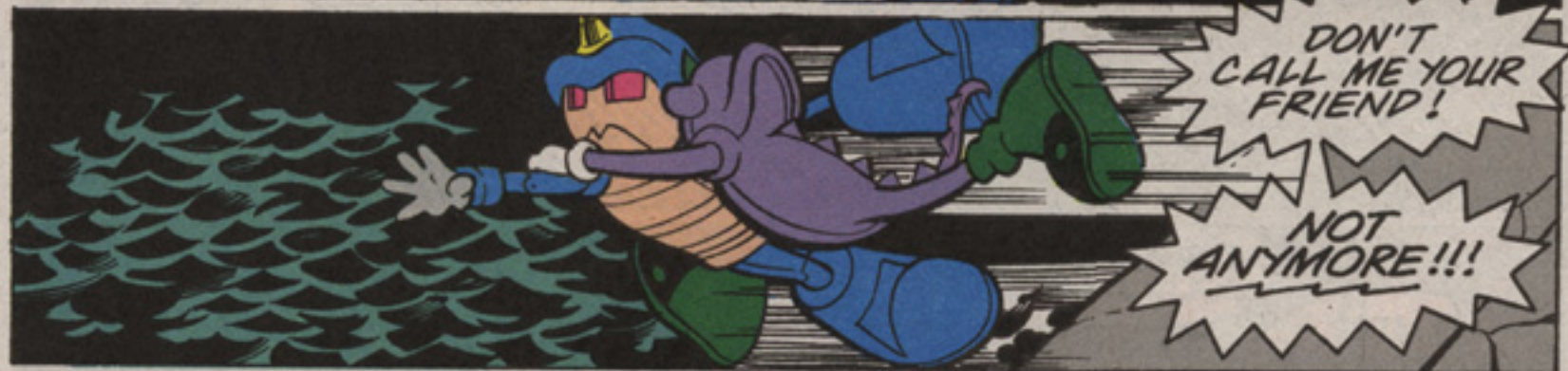
I'D LIKE TO THINK *DESPITE* WHAT'S BECOME OF YOU, THERE'S *STILL* SOME PART OF YOU I CAN *REASON* WITH!

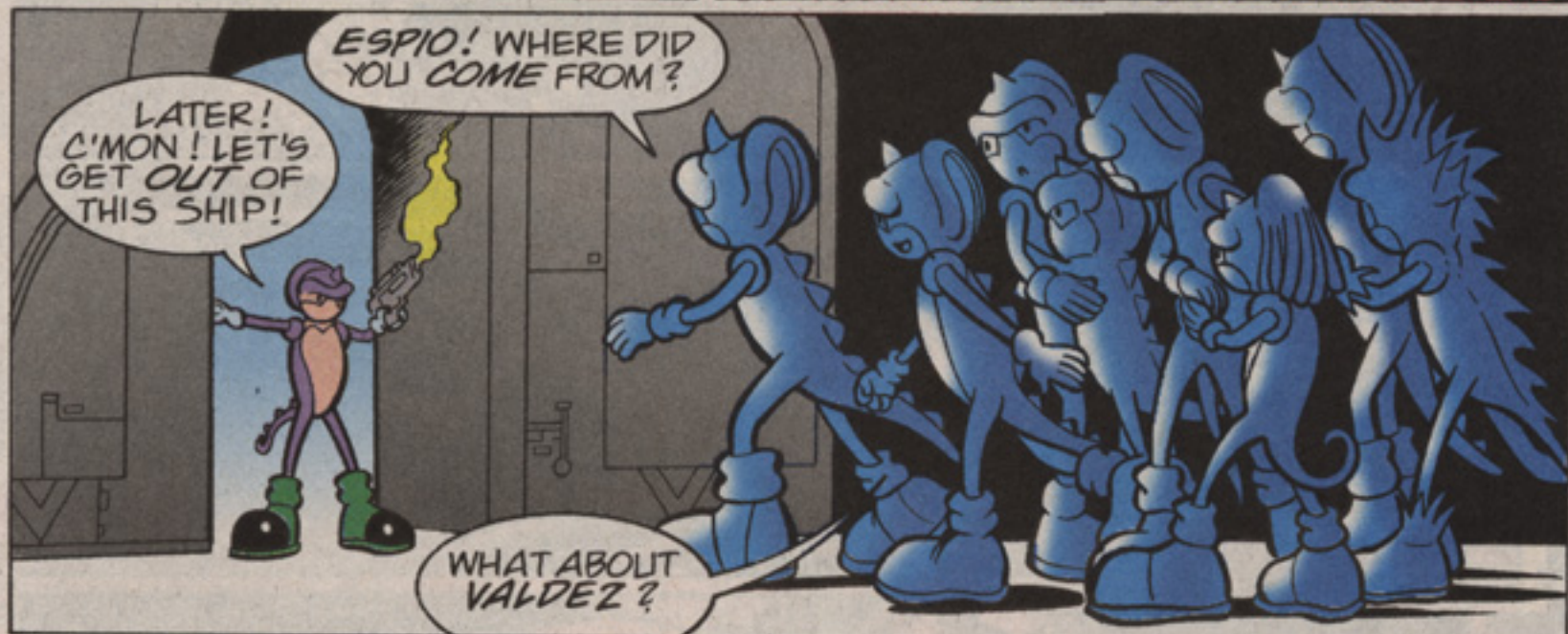
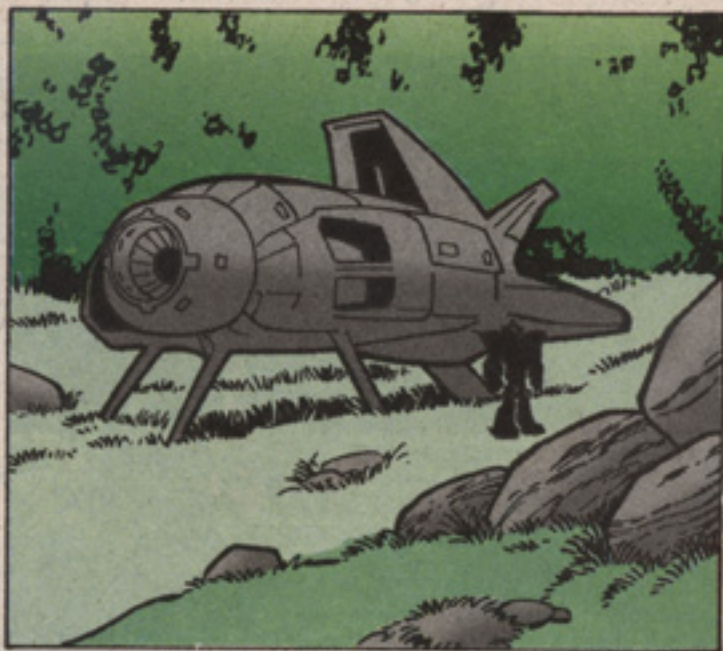
SPARE ME!

IS THAT OUR *OBJECTIVE* UP AHEAD?









THE END

FISTFUL

OF



OFF PANEL

by Gallagher, Manak & Amash

THIS JUST IN!

The upcoming "Sonic Adventure" storyline starts in **SONIC THE HEDGEHOG #79**. (See "Coming Attractions" for more info on it.) Throughout the course of the story line, you will be introduced to many of the elements shown in the game. Such places as The Mystic Ruins and Station Square. You will also be introduced to some new characters like Big The Cat and E-102 Gamma. They'll join Sonic, Tails, Knuckles, Amy Rose and the rest of The Freedom Fighters against the evil of Dr. Robotnik. Together, they try to stop him from unleashing the power of Chaos!

At press time, SEGA's Dreamcast is selling like hot-cakes. In most stores, Sonic Adventure is already sold out. If you can find it, get it because it's so much fun.

For all you fans of **KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA**, we appreciate you for your support. Without it, we would not have had a book for the last 32 issues. Look out for future Knuckles stories to make a regular appearance in the pages of **SONIC THE HEDGEHOG** as well as our quarterly book, **SONIC SUPER SPECIAL**. On behalf of Ken, Manny, Andrew, Vickie, Barry, Spaz, Harvo, Jim, Chris, Frank, Colleen, Mark, Art, Rich, Mike, Dave, Jim and myself, we thank you and bid you goodbye.

Catch you on the flip side!

J.F. GABRIE
Editor / Art Director

Send letters to:
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C/O ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS, INC.
P.O. BOX #419 MAMARONECK, NY 10543
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WEBSITE: www.archiecomics.com
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Note: Due to the overwhelming amount of e-mail and snail mail, it is impossible for us to reply personally to each and every message. However, your opinions are important to us and each message will be read. Also, due to space limitations, some correspondence may be edited. Thanks for understanding!

Since this is the last KNUCKLES letters column for the foreseeable future, we decided to address several questions that many of you have asked, as presented in the following:

Dear Fistful of Letters,

Now that I've read KNUCKLES THE ECHIDNA #28, I liked the entire "First Date" storyline a lot. It was even better than all the others (not including issue 25)! The only part that I didn't really care for was Chris Allan's art. Perhaps that's because I'm not used to it. (I didn't like Manny Galan's drawings at first in the Sonic series, but as time progressed he did very good artwork, and now I miss his work on the main stories.)

1) I want Rob O' the Hedge! Will he ever make another appearance? 2) Will there ever be any more scenes of what's happening in Albion? 3) Will Knuckles and Tails work together, since they're both "saviors?" 4) On the cover of KNUCKLES #25, there's a picture of Knux as a baby. Why aren't there knuckles on his hand? 5) Why is Spectre so angry all the time? 6) Shouldn't Knuckles be learning to fly soon (not including when he's angry -- such as in the Mecha Madness Special)? 7) Does Espio have a nose? 8) How does Knuckles find Espio when he's hiding (issue #1 of the Dark Legion mini-series, pages 15 - 16, 5th

and 1st panels (respectively)? 9) Does Sabre have a glass eye?

On another note, I'd like to say that the Knuckles series is realistic. Knux's parents being divorced, Knuckles fighting with Vector, and several other things make this similar to our world.

Justin Gehrts (age 14)
Galena, IL
jgehrts@hotmail.com

Believe it or not, Justin, your questions are among the most often asked we receive. So here's our response in the order you asked...

1, 2 & 3) Eventually. We have a story called "The Chosen One" in the works that features all three elements, but where and when it will see print is uncertain at this point. 4) Whoops. That was a mistake on our part. These things happen sometimes. 5) What can we say? He's that kind'a echidna. Seriously, there's a lot that remains to be told about him, and someday we hope we get the chance to tell it. 6) Knuckles can fly for extended distances (whereas the other Guardians can only glide), but he's not a Super man, capable of circling the globe. At least, not yet. 7) Not that anyone would notice, but to draw nostril slits where it does go would make him look even more strange than he is. 8) Because Knuckles is not only tapped into the power of the

Chaos Emerald (but a living emerald in his own right), one by-product are his enhanced senses, which enable him to easily detect what others do not. 9) Sabre wears a monocle, which makes it look like he has a glass eye.

And on that note, even though KNUCKLES will no longer be making his usual monthly appearances, that doesn't mean you've seen the last of Rad Red or his cool cast of characters. Upon the conclusion of SEGA Dreamcast's Sonic Adventure adaptation, be on the lookout for... KNUCKLES: THE BEST OF TIMES. THE WORST OF TIMES. It is tentatively scheduled for SONIC SUPER SPECIAL #14, leading into solo stories that'll be appearing every month in the pages of SONIC THE HEDGEHOG. Those who wrote in to KNUCKLES #29-32 can see their letters printed in the SONIC series. As for KNUCKLES series making a possible monthly return... hey, you never know what the future may hold!

Thanks all for your comments and remember...

KEEP COOL!

Cover by Manny Galan and Ken Penders. Colors and separations by Darrin Moore and Heroic Age.

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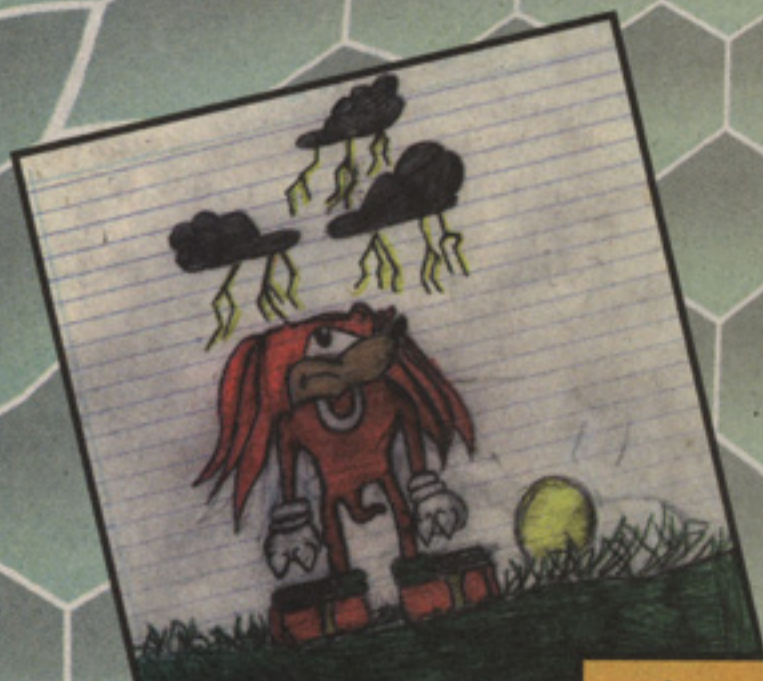
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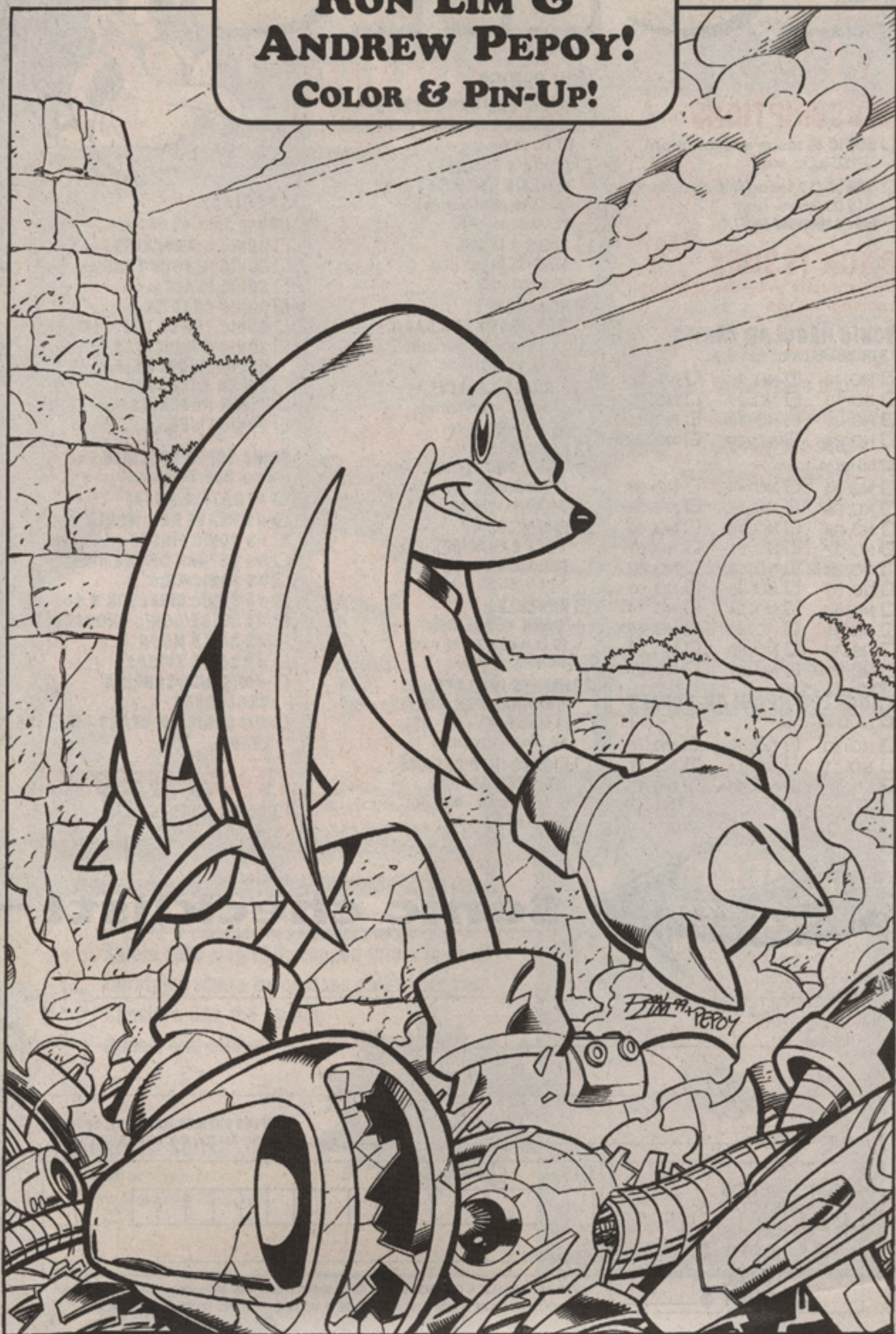
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ANDREW PEPOY!
COLOR & PIN-UP!**



A close-up illustration of Sonic the Hedgehog. He is a blue hedgehog with large green eyes, a wide smile showing his teeth, and a confident pose with one hand pointing forward. He is wearing his signature yellow and red striped shirt. The background is a simple blue and yellow gradient.

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